



# The Call



*May the words of our mouths and the mediations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight oh Lord our strength and our redeemer.*

## A Monthly Newsletter

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THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF  
BABIES  
BORN THAT DAY  
ALL HELPLESS  
DEPENDENT  
NEEDFUL OF LOVE  
WARMTH  
AND SUSTENANCE  
SOME NO DOUBT DID NOT SURVIVE  
TO SEE ANOTHER DAWN  
THEIR TINY LIGHT EXTINGUISHED  
THROUGH LACK OF APPROPRIATE  
CARE  
SOME WOULD GROW UP TO BE  
KINGS  
QUEENS  
LEADERS OF MEN  
OTHERS SLAVES  
PROSTITUTES  
BEGGARS  
MURDERERS AND THIEVES  
MOST HOWEVER  
WOULD LIVE ORDINARY LIVES  
AMONG ORDINARY PEOPLE  
AND LIVE AND DIE  
WHILST THE WORLD SCARCE  
NOTICED  
THEIR EXISTENCE

BUT NOT YOU  
WHO ROSE FROM THE ORDINARY  
TO THE EXTRAORDINARY  
FROM STABLE TO CROSS  
AND BEYOND  
WHILST THE WORLD TRIED ITS BEST  
TO IGNORE YOU  
AND FAILED.  
  
YOU BREAK INTO  
OUR DAILY PRAYERS  
HUMBLE HEARTS  
LAY SOULS BARE  
YOU BREAK IN  
YOU BREAK IN  
  
YOU BREAK IN  
WHEN DEFENSES ARE DOWN  
WITH AN ANGEL'S SHOUT  
OR THE QUIETEST SOUND  
YOU BREAK IN  
YOU BREAK IN  
AND WE CHANGE  
AND ALL THINGS CHANGE  
WHEN YOU BREAK IN.

# Preparing for Jesus

First Sunday of Advent	Light the Candle of Hope	12/2 8:30 & 11:00
Second Sunday of Advent	Light the Candle of Peace	12/9 8:30 & 11:00
Third Sunday of Advent	Light the Candle of Joy	12/16 8:30 & 11:00
Blue Christmas	Prayers for Comfort	12/21 7:00pm
Fourth Sunday in Advent	Light the Candle of Love	12/23 <i>9:30 am only</i>
Christmas Eve	Sunset Eucharist	12/24 4:00pm
Christmas Eve	Silent Night Eucharist	12/24 10:30pm
Christmas Day	Circle the Altar Nativity Eucharist	12/25 9:30am
First Sunday of Christmas	Gather the Creche	12/30 8:30 & 11:00
Feast of Epiphany	Welcome the Three Kings	1/6 8:30 & 11:00
	Burn the Greens	9:30



***epiphany*** (an illuminating discovery, realization or disclosure)

From the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas (January 6<sup>th</sup>) until Ash Wednesday, the church celebrates the season of Epiphany. In its purest sense, Epiphany begins at the time when the **Wise men** arrived in Bethlehem to encounter something new and unexpected, to have their perceptions challenged and changed, to find themselves included in a history, a promise, a love previously meant for a singular people, the 12 tribes of Israel.

Studying the night skies, these scholars from a place far removed from Palestine, detect an unexplained light and determine a celestial body of that magnitude must signal something momentous. Curious, inspired, they venture forth to find answers. After long travels, they discover what appears to be an ordinary family living in simple domesticity.

They know and we know their encounter holds more significance. That particular night light drew three strangers, three aliens, three representatives of the not-of-the-Hebrew people to meet God's crowning light, the light for the whole world. That night light lit their way and beckoned, come, come and see, come and believe, come and be embraced in saving grace of the Son.

The Epiphany season is the illuminating discovery, realization and disclosure that Christ came for us all. He is light for any and all in the world who want to be lifted out of darkness.

This year **January 6<sup>th</sup>** falls on a Sunday so we will celebrate the **Feast of Epiphany** at both services rather than with a midweek service. This is the Sunday and the season we collect the **wise men from our personal nativity sets** to place around the church as a reminder that at his birth, Christ had a message for the world beyond his own. At the 9:30 hour, we will do the traditional **burning of our Christmas greens** in the courtyard in front of the church and then enjoy a festive coffee hour with **Three Kings Cookies**.



# Blue Christmas

There is a quiet tradition in Western Christianity known as Blue Christmas. It is a service held on or near the longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. That week in December, people gather to say prayers for loved ones they have lost, for dreams deferred, for forgiveness for their part in broken relationships, for peace of mind, for hope at long last to come upon them, for acceptance of what is, for encouragement in the coming New Year. Blue Christmas is an acknowledgement that this season of twinkling lights and merriment is not a joyful time for everyone.

The reason many people feel depressed during the Christmas season is because of secular expectations. There are so many glittering things to buy and wrap and put under the elaborate floor to ceiling tree. What does it do to our psyches when we do not have the means to participate in expansive gift giving? What happens to our psyches when our family is not that anxious to get together or when our family is too far flung to make it home to celebrate? TV channels have a month of movies where families face a crisis but in 95 minutes all is resolved and tears are replaced with sweet smiles of affection. What happens to our psyches when December 31<sup>st</sup> comes and no reconciliation has taken place? From Thanksgiving through New Year's our society inundates us with powerful images and messages that say everyone should be light hearted in a season of positivity and possibilities. Those 37 days can be excruciating for tender souls dealing with loss and feeling lonely.

The remedy is not to down play the joy of Christmas but to redirect its emphasis. The better response is to embrace the reality of the first Christmas when a weary couple separated from family found themselves in intensely vulnerable circumstances depending on the goodness of strangers. The first Christmas was not at all about merriment, friends gathering or family reunions. The first Christmas was about many of the emotions encountered in Blue Christmas.

The original Christmas reminds us that while human families may fail us, while plans for our lives but become derailed, while loved ones die and leave us too soon, God knows, holds and redeems our loss. God sends us hope-filled assurance that we are never alone in our disappointment. We are never alone in any condition. Emmanuel, "God with us" is real and true.

For all who find themselves richly blessed with the joys we associate with this season, give thanks. Give thanks and say prayers of comfort for those missing out on those joys. For all who encounter poignant loss this season, breathe in God's love for you. Breathe in his hope for your wellbeing. Surround yourself with permission and space to be sad. Join us for a **Blue Christmas service on the 21st at 7:00PM**. If you know folk hurting this time of year, invite them. We will unite our prayers and together look for God's abiding solace and grace.

Wishing the extended St. Mark's family deep peace this season,

*Sarah +*



# PREPARING THE WAY

## Dec. 23



JOIN US FOR A GREAT FAMILY AND FRIENDS TRADITION STARTED SEVERAL YEARS AGO! ON DEC. 23, AFTER THE 9:30 SERVICE, WE WILL PUT THE LUMINARIES TOGETHER. THIS IS A WONDERFUL TRADITION FOR ALL AGES, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Our Journey will begin @ 4pm at the church. We will travel to different homes for appetizers, sides, a main course, and dessert! Its been a ton of fun and theres of course always a ton of food!

Parents, we need hosts and drivers. If you are interested in either please let Matt know! If you are interested in attending, check your email for the RSUP!

If you have any questions or food allergies please let Matt ASAP! We Hope you can join us for another great St. Mark's Christmas Tradition!

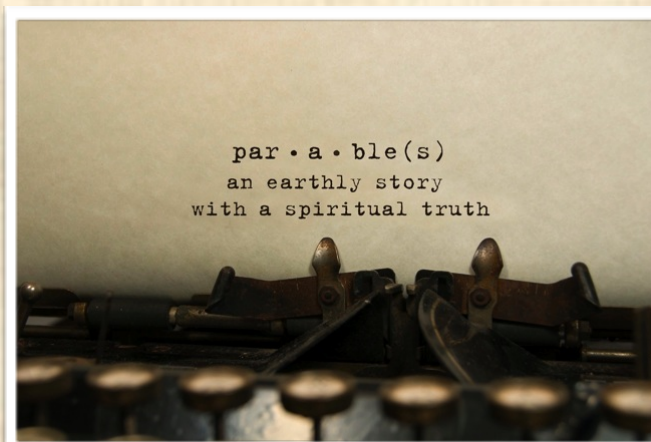
*Youth  
Progressive  
Dinner*

**Dec.  
16**

A few weeks ago our 5th graders were asked to write parables in their Sunday School class. Posted below are several from that class:

## FORMATION INFO.

One day, there was a son and a daughter. The father thought more highly about the son than he did the daughter. The father gave the son fancy clothes and shoes with rings on his fingers. And he ate a whole pig every night. And the daughter got scraps to wear and the leftover food for dinner. The daughter became very jealous of the son. She refused to cook the pig every night and she didn't wash the son's clothes or shoes. She refused for one year and the son got very sick because of the shortage of food and his dirty clothes. He died and the daughter felt so bad, she let herself die the same way the son did.



A five year old never obeyed her parents and as she started to get older she still did not obey her parents. She never listened to her parents or do what they said, and then one day her parents kicked her out. She was 17. She tried to come home but her parents said that she could not come home until she respected them. She stayed away and her parents changed their mind and let her come back home.

Once there was a man named Josiah. His sheep and his cattle died from disease. One day he said to God, "Why have you destroyed my things?" God said to him, "Animals are not things, but creatures, and it was Satan. Never give up on me because I am always with you."

How do these parables speak to you? Who or what do you identify with in these stories? Where do you see God in these stories? What spiritual truth did you find in these earthly stories?

Our children are doing amazing work in their study of Jesus. When you see them, ask them what they are learning and let their stories become a part of your story. We are all fearfully and wonderfully created in the image of God. May God's image be the image we share with the world in the coming holiday season.

## Upcoming Events:

**Dec. 1 - Children's Christmas Party 6pm-8pm in the Youth Space** (wear your Christmas PJs!)

**Dec. 16 - Youth Progressive Dinner 4pm @ St. Mark's** (wear your Christmas PJs!)

**Dec. 23 - Luminaries @ 9:30** (church wide event for all ages!)





**ST. MARK'S SUN CATCHER ON SALE NOW!  
\$20**

THE YOUTH ARE SELLING THESE BEAUTIFUL SUN CATCHERS TO RAISE MONEY FOR OUR END OF YEAR ACTIVITIES. THEY ARE MADE OUT OF 100% RECYCLED GLASS AND LOOK AMAZING HANGING IN A WINDOW OR ON YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE. GET YOURS BEFORE THEY ARE GONE!

**ANGEL TREE**



The Angel Tree is up &  
in Founders Hall

Pick an Angel from the Tree  
and provide the \$ amount listed  
Help send our Ranson Scholars to  
Summer Camp at the YMCA.

The Camperships we have provided in years past  
have created life changing opportunities to many  
middle schoolers who would not have had this  
experience without our help.

*\*Checks can be made to St. Mark's*

*All funds appreciated. To fund a full week of camp is  
\$167*

*Note Camperships in the memo line*

***Trees will be available for pick up on Sunday  
December 2nd.***

***Pick yours up after the annual meeting.***



Picture Day at  
Ranson IB Middle School



Volunteers Welcome  
Ranson Middle School  
is looking for volunteers  
to help with school pictures.

If you can help usher scholars through their sittings  
anytime on  
December 4th  
from 8:30am-2pm  
contact Jon Rochester  
[jon1.rochester@cms.K12.nc.us](mailto:jon1.rochester@cms.K12.nc.us)

Weekend Food Backpacks  
Our Pantry is Running Low

Please help us to restock our pantry so it  
looks like this....



Food items or monetary donations are  
appreciated. Thank you for all the support  
so far this year.  
Note RMS food backpacks on memo line of check

**R.I.S.E**

(Raiders in Support of Equity)  
Will hold its next RISE/PTSA  
meeting on

December 10th at 6:30pm  
Please note we will meet at  
Bruns Academy School  
501 S. Bruns Avenue Charlotte

**Buildings & Grounds**

Invites you in the spirit of giving to  
make a gift or memorial  
to the stabilization and expansion of the  
Serenity Garden

Funds will be used to purchase specific plants  
and hardscape items.

Please note B&G Serenity Garden  
on the memo line of your check.

Thank you B&G





### **Birthdays**

Linda Amidei - 12/5  
 Peter Macon - 12/5  
 Cora Stein – 12/5  
 Ruth Blackwelder - 12/6  
 Jackson Rhinehardt - 12/6  
 Jackie McWhorter - 12/9  
 Pryor Rhinehardt - 12/9  
 Debbie Leisey – 12/10  
 Matt Addington - 12/12  
 Nancy Harding - 12/13  
 Robert Gambill - 12/14  
 Audrey Boyle - 12/15  
 Victoria Mason - 12/15  
 Robyn Englishman - 12/16  
 Matthew Huber – 12/16  
 Bridget Vanevenhoven – 12/16  
 Nancy Whitehead - 12/18  
 Ellie DuBois – 12/19  
 Nancy Tatom – 12/23  
 Lesli Kathman - 12/24  
 Homer Sanford – 12/24  
 Jan Sanford - 12/24  
 Andrew James - 12/26  
 Heather Linker – 12/26  
 Trulyn Rhinehardt - 12/26  
 John Southwell – 12/27  
 Sandi Sumas - 12/28  
 Eric Brown - 12/29  
 Vivian Mach – 12/30

### **Anniversaries**

David & Laura Fahey - 12/17  
 TJ & Johanna Tatlow – 12/29

### **Prayers for continued healing:**

Richard & Mary Beth Masline	
Saunders & Billy Black	Martha Ann Springer
The Mason Family	George Ann Beam
Bob Egan	Pat Pagola
Joe Brown	Phyllis Barnwell
Bob Weeks	Marty Fulton
Vivian Edgerton	Mike Wilson

### **Panera Bread Pick-Up**

**Ian & Liesel Doolittle – 12/7**  
**Mark & Lacy Hamilton – 12/14**  
**Scott & Penny Brett -12/21**  
**Willard & Barbara Osburn – 12/28**



Join the men of the church for  
**"Thirstday", Thursday**  
 (A testosterone friendly answer to WINE.)

**December 13th at 6:30pm**

We will gather at

**Parry's Pizza, Northlake**

**(outside the mall near Dick's)**

**We will have a brief biblical reflection, food, beverages and some prayer.  
 Look for us in the outdoor seating area.**

For additional information please contact David Fahey 704-562-7587.  
 No RSVP required but texts are welcome.

**W.I.N.E.**



**Women in Need of Entertainment**

**December 17th 6:30pm**  
 at the home of

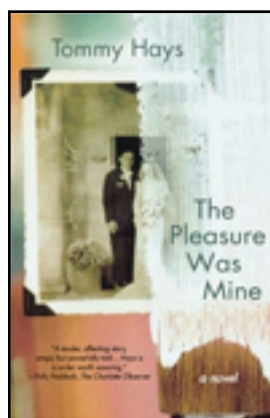
**Tracy Tinsley**  
**11737 Trails End Lane**  
**Huntersville**

Bring a wrapped ornament for our annual ornament exchange. You won't want to miss it!

**Bring a a bottle of WINE or a dish to share.  
 If you don't have time for either, just bring yourself.**

**<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c45aeab28a2fe3-december>**

Please contact Allison Rhinehardt [allibrett@gmail.com](mailto:allibrett@gmail.com)  
 or Dawn Middleton [dawnmiddleton@bellsouth.net](mailto:dawnmiddleton@bellsouth.net)  
 with any questions



St Mark's Muses Book Club  
 Join us on Thursday

**December 13th**  
**@ 10am**

We will meet in the parish  
 hall at St. Marks

We will be discussing  
**The Pleasure Was Mine**  
**by**  
**Tommy Hays**

*Please note the change in location.*

Join us even if you haven't read the book.  
 New bookclub selections will be given out at this time.

For more information please contact  
 Genny Hinkle for more information.  
[gnyhinkle@yahoo.com](mailto:gnyhinkle@yahoo.com) or 704-595-7957

## Thanks to all who supported the Escuelita Dinner and Silent Auction



Thank you St Mark's



for the cards, telephone calls, prayer shawl, prayers and thoughts that everyone has shown me during my mother's illness and the loss of my mother. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement.

Sincerely,  
Cindy Thrower



"As of November 26th, 2018,

136 pledge cards were sent out. 84 cards have been turned in, for a total pledge of **\$324,970 (\$3,868.00 avg. per unit)**

Please mail in, drop off, hand in, complete the online form or take a picture and email, your pledge card to the church office as soon as possible."



## 2018 Stewardship Update

	2018 Budgeted	October YTD Actual
	\$344,175	\$297,268
Current Pledge Total		
All other anticipated income		
Non-Pledge Offerings	\$20,000	\$14,939
Other Income (use of space by outside groups)	\$17,000	\$14,090
Sales Tax Refunds	\$2,000	\$ 2,911
Daisy Shipp McCoy Foundation Trust Income	<u>\$32,750</u>	<u>\$ 27,444</u>
Total Budgeted Operating Income	\$415,925	\$356,653
2018 Budgeted Expenses Approved by Vestry		
Staff	\$263,804	\$217,666
Diocesan Support	\$43,454	\$36,212
Campus Maintenance & Utilities	\$53,012	\$48,199
Office Administration & Other	\$26,515	\$ 20,274
Youth & Christian Formation	\$12,380	\$ 6,786
Outreach & Escuelita Support	\$12,300	\$ 9,552
Parish Life, Pastoral Care, Stewardship & Parish Retreat	\$ 7,100	\$ 3,532
Worship & Music	\$ 3,500	\$ 1,350
%7 pledges unfulfilled based on historical average	<u>\$24,092</u>	
Total 2018 Budgeted Expenses	\$446,157	\$343,571
Current Excess/Deficit of receipts over disbursements	\$30,232	\$13,082
2018 pledge notes	100 pledge cards of 143 have been received	
	Average Pledge \$3,477	
*Year to Date Pledge Fulfillment 86%		

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Current 2018		
Operating Income and Expenses		
	2018	2018
	Forecast	Budget
Income		
Pledged Income	358,138	344,175
Operating Reserve (7%)	-	-24,092
	358,138	320,083
Non-Pledged Offerings	18,038	20,000
Other Income	16,610	17,000
Sales Tax Refund	2,911	2,000
Gifts & Memorial	-	-
Daisy Shipp McCoy Fund Trust Income	32,903	32,750
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>428,600</b>	<b>391,833</b>
Expenses		
Staff	263,383	263,804
Diocesan Support	43,454	43,454
Campus Utilities & Fees	39,174	39,645
Campus Maintenance	14,873	13,367
Office, Administration & Other	27,434	26,515
Youth & Christian Formation	8,588	12,380
Outreach & Escuelita Support	10,802	12,300
Hospitality, Stewardship, Pastorial Care & Kanuga	5,469	7,100
Worship & Music	2,394	3,500
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>415,571</b>	<b>422,065</b>
<b>Net Operating Total</b>	<b>13,029</b>	<b>-30,232</b>

St. Mark's Episcopal Church 2019 Budget	
Operating Income and Expenses	
Income	
Pledged Income	324,970
Operating Reserve (4%)	-12,998
	311,972
Non-Pledged Offerings	20,000
Other Income	17,000
Sales Tax Refund	5,000
Daisy Shipp McCoy Fund Trust Income	33,360
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>387,332</b>
Expenses	
Staff	265,836
Diocesan Support	40,512
Campus Utilities & Fees	39,430
Campus Maintenance	13,367
Campus Deferred Maintenance	16,850
Office, Administration & Other	27,950
Youth & Christian Formation	12,180
Outreach & Escuelita Support	12,300
Hospitality, Stewardship, Pastorial Care & Kanuga	7,100
Worship & Music	3,390
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>438,915</b>
<b>Net Operating Total</b>	<b>-51,583</b>

# Come to the Annual Meeting 12/2 at 9:30

**Meet the Vestry Candidates,**

**Enjoy Brunch, Discussion & Fellowship**

On the following pages you will meet 4 vestry candidates for the 2019-2021 term.

The candidates for Vestry were asked to submit a bio & respond to the following:

In my tenure on the St. Mark's Vestry, I think the Holy Spirit is leading me to engage this issue or ministry for the health of the body.

**Please take the time to read what each candidate has to say, prayerfully consider your options, attend the annual meeting on December 2nd and vote for 3 new vestry members as 3 members roll off.**

## BETH HUNT



Hi everyone. My name is Beth Hunt. My daughter, Shannon, and I have been members at St. Mark's for almost five years. In that time, we have planted deep roots in this spiritual community. Truth is, it took me a while to find a spiritual home. I was raised in a loving and strict Catholic family, where church was an obligation and God was to be feared. When the Holy Spirit led me to look for a place that better fit my beliefs, I stumbled into the Episcopal Church — first as a casual worshipper at St. Michael's in Austin, TX; then as a more intentional worshipper at Grace Episcopal in the Georgetown part of Washington D.C., and then as a member of St. Peter's in uptown Charlotte for five years.

When Shannon and I decided we wanted a church community closer to home, we made an appointment to talk with Rev. Sarah one chilly winter evening. The way she described St. Mark's, its people and its ministries made it clear we'd found our way home.

In addition to having served on Matt Addington's Parish Discernment Committee, I am involved in several ministries at St. Mark's:

I'm working with the Legacy Grant Committee to fund and build a commercial-grade kitchen in our new building that will serve as home to Flyin' Lion Ministries, a culinary-based training program for disadvantaged women in Huntersville and the surrounding area;

I've been a "delightful usher" for more than three years and a chalist for one; and,

I'm a delegate from St. Mark's to the annual Diocesan Convention.

In standing for the St. Mark's Vestry, I believe the Holy Spirit is leading me to fully engage in preparing St. Mark's for the future, by working on business models and ministries that will build and sustain our new fellowship hall. I also want to lead an effort to provide additional spiritual growth opportunities for adults, such as mission trips and pilgrimages.

I would welcome the opportunity to serve St. Mark's in these ways and any others God may suggest.

In peace.  
Beth Hunt



## JEFF SERRA



I have been a member of St. Mark's for 7 years now as an active member of the choir. I first came to St. Mark's after graduating college out of a recommendation from the rector at my former church in Durham, NC.

She had heard wonderful things about both the church and Reverend Sarah. I have continued to attend due to Reverend Sarah's inspirational spirit and the community atmosphere of the congregation. I feel called to further develop our music program as a way to help elevate worship at St. Mark's. Outside of church, I teach upper level high school math at Mountain Island Charter School.

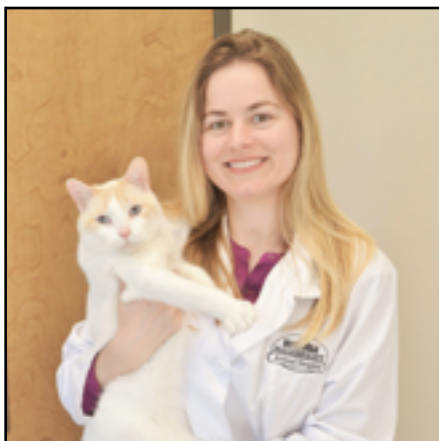
## KELLY POPE



I live in Huntersville with my husband, Sean, and our chocolate lab, Paisley. I am involved with

the Hospitality Committee, La Escuelita San Marcos, and our wedding ministry as well serving as a Sunday School teacher for our littlest members. I have attended St. Mark's since I was a child, and love to call the church on the hill my home. I think the Holy Spirit is leading me to dedicate my energy to all of the good things happening at St. Mark's. I have a balance of the life-long love of our St. Mark's traditions with an open-minded approach to doing what is best for our parish family.

## Myra Southwell



Hello sweet congregation. My name is Myra Southwell and I have lived in Huntersville for the past 5 years. I am a veterinarian and work at Hambright Animal Hospital here in Huntersville. Four years ago I married John Southwell, a project engineer for Husqvarna. I am originally from Currituck county NC, which is where my husband and I met in high school. I went to the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in Durham, NC and graduated from North Carolina State University with a BS in biochemistry and a doctorate of veterinary medicine. I enjoy spending time with my husband and our fur babies, travel, and history. I am also a member of the Junior League of Charlotte.

We joined St. Marks because we fell in love with Sarah's powerful sermons and the sweet fellowship of the welcoming congregation. I am honored to even be considered for a position on the vestry, and I feel called to serve our congregation in any way I can. As part of the Junior League, I have fostered a servant's heart to volunteer and help with fundraising and donations. I would love to do the same for St. Marks!



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